



Media Contact:
Patrick Harrison
Paradise Advertising & Marketing, Inc.
(727) 821-5155 ext. 110
Patrick@paradiseadv.com

STORY IDEA:

**SEMINOLE COUNTY LAKES AMONG 40 SITES FOR
FLORIDA'S ANNUAL SEPTEMBER ALLIGATOR HARVEST**

If you're considering an autumn sojourn to Central Florida and you're looking for a taste of real adventure, forget the area's theme parks and attractions. The "ultimate" Central Florida vacation experience awaits thrill-seekers each September in Seminole County, just minutes north of downtown Orlando.

For both curious observers and plucky participants, the month-long, state-regulated alligator harvests — staged statewide since 1988 — offer the thrill of a big game safari and the exhilaration of sport fishing, Florida-style. And while the official hunting season is always eagerly anticipated, Seminole County's 10,000-acre Lake Jesup — with limited St. Johns River system access — is the focus of special attention this year. The home of an alligator population estimated at more than 3,000 — local fishermen attest to seeing sunning alligators "stacked like cords of wood" along its banks — Lake Jesup unofficially lays claim to having one of the nation's largest concentrations of alligators per acre.

Previously a protected, official research water body, Lake Jesup was restricted from trapping. Its studies now complete, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (which regulates the harvest program) named the lake as one of this year's 36 designated harvest areas along with Lake Harney, also in Seminole County, and several stretches of the St. Johns River forming the county's eastern border.

While gator hunting may sound like big-time fun, it's a serious undertaking with potentially deadly consequences. So not surprisingly, there are strict harvesting guidelines. The good news is — thanks to the state's computerized lottery drawing — even non-residents (at least 18 years of age) are eligible to apply.

Permit applications are available annually at the Commission's five regional offices beginning May 15 and must be completed and received by mail no later than June 1. There is a limit of one application per person. Randomly selected winners are notified via mail by June 30. The drawing also mandates where trappers may hunt and on which dates.

Those eligible must then purchase an alligator trapping license (\$250 for residents; \$1,000 for non-residents) by July 15 and may elect to attend a free, three-hour Commission training session presented at various locations around the state from late July through early August each year. The public is also welcome.

Many people think gator hunting involves a rifle, but in Florida, you have to have a line attached to the gator at all times for it to be legal.

For further details on Seminole County gator hunting, contact the Commission's Central Region office at (352) 732-1225 or its Alligator Management Section at (352) 955- 2230.

For more information and assistance, please contact Patrick Harrison or Patrick@paradiseadv.com or (727) 821-5155 ext. 110.

